Class 234.2P Book R539
General Theological Seminary Library
CHELSEA SQUARE. NEW YORK
cop. 1

PRESENTED BY
Dean Hoffman

An Essay Toward Faith

An Essay Toward Faith

BY

WILFORD L. ROBBINS, D.D.

DEAN OF THE CATHEDRAL
OF ALL SAINTS, ALBANY

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
91 AND 93 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
LONDON AND BOMBAY
1900

30126

234.2P
R539

Copyright, 1900, by
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

Press of J. J. Little & Co.
Astor Place, New York

TO

One whose simplicity and sincerity have been the best exponent of the life of faith,—as his friendship has been the unfailing source of inspiration and joy.

"Now faith may be thus understood; it is that power by which a man gives himself up to anything, seeks, wills, adheres to, and unites with it, so that his life lives in it, and belongs to it. Now to whatever the soul gives itself up; whatever it hungereth after; and in which it delights, and seeks to be united; there, and there only is its faith; that faith which can work either life or death, and according to which faith, everything is, and must be done to man."

WILLIAM LAW.

This little book has a purely practical aim. It tells of a path along which one man has found help; and if one, why not others? It is not a reasoned treatise, rather a series of hints. If it possess aught of logical argument it is certainly not logic which would pass muster in the schools. It assumes certain premises with no attempt to justify them,—God and the soul, the longing of the soul for God, its utter unrest until it find Him. To him who doubts of these the book can make no appeal. It may be that there is much of paradox in the following pages, but he who is affrighted at seeming contradiction will never push far into the realm of Divine Truth. The higher a truth the less is it patient of earth's petty consistencies, our most intimate experiences assure us of this. Love,

even in its more earthly aspects, is not to be caught in the trammels of any logical definition. Love proves to us that we may know what we cannot explain. We may sometimes come closer to reality by means of broadly conflicting statements, which can only be fused in the fire of the soul's activity, than by any careful process of excision whereby words are brought into superficial harmony. It may be doubted whether we have not been too much enamoured of negations. Perhaps mutually exclusive propositions are rarer than we have been wont to think. The soul called to a life of radical independence may at the same time find its freedom in the humblest regard for precedent. Private judgment and deference for authority may be perfectly compatible in the spiritual sphere, to deny either may be to thwart the highest emprise of faith. Novel phrases and traditional doctrines may in all honesty find utterance on the same lips. Of course there will always be a certain number of men who are so convinced of the comprehensive exactitude

of their own formula that they will take umbrage at the suggestion that a kernel of truth lies beneath the watchwords of contending parties. But such can hardly have caught a passing glimpse of the mighty mystery which encompasses them. We are driven to regard them as a negligible quantity as we press on seeking truth. Meanwhile the trend of our argument which will seem too broad to some will doubtless seem narrow to others. There is a widely prevalent impatience of orthodox statement as such, which is as curious a superstition as was ever fostered by the most exclusive of religious sects. We will try to rid ourselves of superstition, heretical or otherwise. And after all it matters little whether approval be won. If any reader be stirred to thinking more seriously on the subject of faith, be moved to greater strenuousness of spiritual endeavour, to a quickened longing for God, the book will have abundantly fulfilled its mission.

Contents

	PAGE
A Word to the Reader . .	vii
The Problem	1
An Age of Doubt	8
A Trick of the Imagination .	14
The Traditions of Men . .	20
Slavery to the Letter . .	27
A Plea for Breadth . . .	34
Persistent Questionings . . .	41
Pride of Intellect	50
Pride of Orthodoxy	57
Spiritual Pride	63
Worldliness	71
The Ease-loving Heart . .	86
Mere Morality	103

Contents

	PAGE
Hidden Insincerities	117
The Tyranny of Custom . .	129
Delusive Independence	142
Barriers Which Enfranchise .	153
Spiritual Realizations . . .	164

An Essay Toward Faith

I

THE PROBLEM

HOW to make life strong and beautiful and free, this is the question which presses more insistently for an answer than any other. Amidst the slavery, the unloveliness, and the weakness which beset us we are haunted with the sense of missing mighty opportunities. We have been entrusted with a great gift, and we are squander-

ing it as though it were of trifling worth. Strange visitings reach us of an underlying health and good cheer at the heart of things. Why do we not share more largely in that sane and joyous mood, rich in untold satisfactions, which has marked the lives of saints? The record of past heroism abides, but in what lay its secret? Alas, the secret of heroism can be apprehended only by living heroically, and we sadly acknowledge that we are lacking in the initial impulse to such high endeavour.

There is a blundering stage of mistaken effort where many work out their apprenticeship. Men seek to win freedom and joy by clearing away external obstacles. With eager ambition and courage they fix their eye on the vantage-ground of some coveted position, whence they hope

erelong to make essay at living. We call them fools when this ambition directs itself toward evidently material ends, as worldly riches or social prestige. But the method is equally futile when the glamour of a cheap idealism makes the end at which they aim seem less sordid. Scope for philanthropy through favouring environment may be the dream, and a man may toil toward it with the noblest ardour thus to win freedom. But what if when the goal is reached the heart refuse to love? The habit of love is not engendered by outward opportunities. One may have a splendid engine, flawless in construction, but without fire to generate steam it lies helpless and useless. And fire cannot be kindled by the most perfect mechanical adjustments. Or, perhaps, religion is the vantage-ground sought

for the soul's progress. Many adventitious circumstances combine to determine a man's exact choice in this regard. But be the religious method adopted a crude emotionalism, or the profoundest and most chastened form of Christian doctrine and discipline, the issue will be equally disappointing if it be conceived as some external force which is to work out the soul's enfranchisement. Along this path many an honest man travels to unbelief. He has made trial of religion, he will tell you, and it has failed. Naturally, for love and joy and freedom are glorious and eternal realities which cannot be nourished by either a transient thrill of nerves or any system of mere historic reminiscence.

The true method of solving life's problem must ever be internal rather than external. What we need is a

new spirit, not new and more congenial circumstances. All the wonder and the mystery of the moral and the spiritual world, the great *other* of the visible and material, are pressing close upon the soul now. All opportunities open out before us here and now; we can never hope for larger or more sympathetic environment. The spark which by God's grace shall make us freemen lies within, not without. The power by which the soul lays hold of reality, the reality of realities, the fact behind the shows of life, the substance behind the semblance, is faith. Faith, and faith alone, can make you free. It is a poor, abused term indeed, raised often as the standard of the basest superstition, as though thinking a thing made it true, as though intellectual acceptance of a proposition redeemed life. But at the same time

it is the watchword of liberty, that liberty which he knows whose will is one with God's will, whose strength is as the strength of God, the beauty of whose life reflects the eternal and ineffable beauty of the Divine.

We will not attempt to define faith. Perchance it is too vast in its sweep of spiritual import to be perfectly analysed and clearly set forth in logical terms. It is enough at present to know that by faith the soul lays hold of God. God is dim and distant to us, often little better than a mere abstract conception, because our faith is weak. Faith transforms character because through the door of faith God floods the soul with life and light. But we shall best discover the richness of faith's content by an indirect approach. What hinders faith's triumph in our own lives?

What are the forces commonly arrayed against faith? As we study these questions it may be that the fair lineaments of a victorious faith will dawn upon our sight more clearly. Men often rest content with a beggarly attainment because they do not know what true faith is. The path of faith is easy where they think it hard, joyous where they deem it stern and repellent. The theme is at least a practical one and worthy of careful pondering, since the claims made for faith are so great and its effectiveness is so manifest where it holds exclusive sway.

II

AN AGE OF DOUBT

THE antithesis popularly drawn between faith and doubt conceals not infrequently a subtle confusion of thought. We cannot attain to faith because so many doubts assail us; it were as true, and possibly more suggestive, to affirm that we are haunted with doubts because we will not take the trouble to exercise faith. Doubts are often generated by hidden movements of the soul, they are secondary phenomena, the result rather than the cause of faithlessness. But let us grant that doubts invade the soul through no inner fault or flaw in the moral life. It is manifestly true that

the age in which we live is predominantly critical, and therefore tends toward the disintegration of established beliefs. We must still be on our guard against the coddling of ourselves as the victims of circumstance which threatens to blur the lines of a strict individual responsibility. It were a poor plea, should we ever be called to stand in the presence of the Living God, to exclaim: "True, I believed but little concerning Thee, and that little only half-heartedly, but at least it was more than my neighbours believed." It may be true that the naïve and instinctive faith of earlier ages is for most men impossible in this later day of intellectual sophistication, but the lesson to be drawn from this fact would seem to be widely different from that generally deduced. The needs of man remain the same as of

old. Without God and immortality life is at best an insoluble enigma. The soul still yearns for God, and finds all other satisfactions vain and illusive at the last. Moral enthusiasms, which alone redeem life, find their highest source of inspiration in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Why were it not the part of wisdom, then, to regard the difficulty which besets faith's attainment as a door of spiritual opportunity, rather than a barrier blocking progress? This has always been the attitude of those who have achieved largest results in any line of heroic endeavour. The strenuousness of striving appals the weak, but the strong rejoice in the conflict and resistance only adds to their might. Faith grows strong by grappling with obstacles, but more than this, faith always needs clarifying, and fighting for life

puts to flight morbid vapours. Faith is not a heyday of believing what we will. Faith is the grasping of ultimate spiritual realities, and it needs to be tested, tried, chastened ere it attain its true balance and proportion, and be worthy to rank with reason as the noblest endowment of manhood. What better then for faith than to be confronted at each step of its progress by stern uncompromising doubt? If it be not strong to overcome then let it be worsted, it is not of the stuff to make men free. If it can be driven from its stronghold this is proof that it never really held the ground which it claimed. Half-faiths are generally the basest of superstitions, and it is the function of criticism to slay them in the interest of man's enlightenment and progress. Hospitals for a valetudinarian faith, with drugs to stimu-

late and thick walls to guard against the breath of any wind of opposition, do not constitute a very lofty ideal of the Kingdom of God. There is, of course, a coward in most of us which dreads the heat and turmoil of the fray, which longs to sink back and luxuriate in an easy and unquestioning acceptance of Divine Truth. But we would fain believe that there is a man in us too which shrinks from no stress of sacrifice in battling for the noblest ends. As the fight waxes hotter, strength to meet the demands made upon us waxes too. There are splendid heights of assurance reserved for those who win their way thereto by unflinching courage. Spiritual certitudes multiply in strength and sweetness as a man walks humbly with God. It were a gross misconception were we to picture a living

faith as forever without respite groping its way amidst a cloud of doubts. The truth to lay to heart is simply this. Because the age seems strangely inimical this is no ground for discouragement either as regards the inner development or the outer effectiveness of faith. Difficulty may always be construed in terms of opportunity, and only the craven accounts it the synonym of defeat.

III

A TRICK OF THE IMAGINATION

A WONDROUS change has passed upon the world's thinking in the broadening of the scope of human knowledge. The immensity of the physical universe as revealed by modern science has dealt a staggering blow to the conception of relative size which had for centuries dominated the mind of man. We dwell no longer in the child's world around which sun and moon and stars sweep in their courses subservient to man's need, created with a special view to human ends. A cold breath from the unfathomable

spaces of the heavens has tempered our estimate of rank in nature. The imagination when it seeks to follow in the wake of scientific proof and bridge the gulf which separates between star and star, falters and fails in the weariness of sheer incapacity. As we figure this earth of ours a mere dust-speck amidst the countless myriads of whirling worlds, how strangely remote and unreal, like a fancy from childhood's dreamland, seem the thought of Incarnation and the doctrine of a special providence guiding the destiny of the individual to its petty ends. A great statesman on his death-bed confessed that his faith failed him when he looked at the stars. A student at one of our universities, in the confidence of intimate converse, recently said,—"I believed until the vastness

of the universe dawned on me. Now when I enter a church and kneel before the altar my heart revolts at the mockery. What has this to do with the immensities and eternities which encompass this tiny world of ours?" This temper is wide-spread, often haunting with a vague unrest those who fail to voice it articulately. The awfulness of unbounded space, the crushing sense of man's relative insignificance, have enthralled the imagination. Yet genuine as is the doubt thus suggested, what a veritable ineptitude of thought it discovers. The imagination which suffices to form clear pictures within a narrow sphere, confronted with limitless extension dies away in indefiniteness,—which simply signifies that finite powers are not adequate to a perfect synthesis of the material universe.

But a moral or spiritual fact has no relation whatsoever to physical size, it has kinship with the absolute. To suffer ourselves to be fooled by what in the last analysis is a mere unreasoning sentiment is the part of tyros in intellectual exercise. Spacial relations indeed seem almost like a deceiving mirage. The mystery of magnitude is offset by the mystery of minuteness. Pray, what will you call large,—a mouse, or a mountain, or a myriad suns? Size is a purely relative conception. The marvellous complexity of a diatom vies in perfection with the intricacy of a star system. But honour, freedom, love, these refuse to be classed in the same category. An act of self-sacrifice would not gain in dignity and worth because the doer were fifty cubits high. Its significance and value are

to be measured intensively not extensively. God who is a spirit does not lend Himself to the play of the scientific imagination. Its legitimate function stops short with the physical and the material. And whatever readjustments of popular cosmologies may be entailed by the advance of scientific knowledge, the foundations of spiritual truth cannot be assailed from this quarter for the simple reason that the two spheres of thought do not overlap. A mysterious interdependence indeed seems established in the complex entity of man. Man, body and spirit, child of earth and child of heaven. But the faculties of judgment in the one sphere are sharply distinguished from those in the other, and only disastrous confusion can result from the failure to recognize these preëstablished limitations. It is strange

that scientific exactitude should make a man the slave of fancy, yet this happens when the universe seems too big to tally with a God of love.

IV

THE TRADITIONS OF MEN

ALL scientific knowledge is valuable and venerable in the eyes of a true faith. The record writ in God's book of nature cannot contradict the revelation of God mediated through the Scripture. God speaks through the Bible to the soul, God speaks through nature to the mind,—the message of Scripture is certified by an abundant spiritual experience as cogent as the argument of any inductive reasoning. The two voices then cannot be essentially at variance. Faith starts from this premise and dares forecast perfect reconciliation with a boldness which puts to

shame the tremors of a halting logic. It is not faith but cowardice which would attempt to shield God's Book by stupid denials of well-grounded scientific conclusions. It is natural that when the corrective of a painstaking physical research was lacking, men should have put a gloss upon the Scripture narrative which brought it into accord with their imperfect knowledge of the course of the world's history. But to accept this gloss now as of equal authority with the text of the Bible itself, to confuse the one with the other, is mere dull credulity. The Book of Genesis, like all intense poetic expressions of truth, gives of its riches in exact proportion to the antecedent fulness of the receiver's mind and heart. He who brings little receives little, he who brings much receives much. The crude picture of primeval man which

held sway in the mind of our forefathers found no contradiction here, for the burden of the message was concerned with the moral and spiritual history of man and not with the question of his physical development. The life-giving revelation lay in the truth that God is above all and through all and in all. The clearer light cast by science upon the complex method of creation finds no contradiction in Scripture for the same reason. Why unnecessarily import a contradiction? Sophistries and word-quibbling are always unworthy the champions of faith. Why fall back upon the somewhat disingenuous plea that Evolution is as yet an unproved hypothesis? At least it is a working hypothesis of grander scope and more marvellous congruity with established facts than any other generalization of the scien-

tific mind. The reach of its future application cannot yet be foretold. The principles which it suggests may yet reveal to us many a secret of man's social and moral progress as well as of his physical development,—to a certain degree this has already come true. To confound the eternal truth contained in the Book of Genesis with notions of human history which contradict facts is wantonly to invite disaster. A notion is a feeble barrier wherewith to dam the irresistible current of truth. Faith does not hold by notions but by the everlasting truths of God. It is not claimed that this readjustment of traditional conceptions is a light and easy task. The reconciliation grasped by faith is as yet only partially an accomplished fact. Much yet remains to be wrought out with toil into a clearly articulated

system of thought which shall satisfy the intellect. The flippant way in which theologians of a certain type assume that the path is short and plain prompts honest men at times to lay stress on a few of the difficulties which beset the way. What of sin? What of the break in the continuity of moral evolution through wilful rebellion of the rational creation? What of the reaching down of heaven toward the upward-yearning earth and the word of revelation supplementing the imperfection of man's natural apprehension of spiritual truth? He must be a bold reasoner who esteems that these fundamental truths of Scripture cohere easily with the claims of modern scientific thought. But let us recognize the difficulty where it really lies and abandon wilful difficulties which the perverse imaginings of men have con-

jured up. There are arrogant claims of science to an exclusive consideration which faith must ever deny. Faith is searching for the Living God and when the shibboleth of Law is offered as substitute she is quick to detect the idol of the schools. For science has its superstitions as well as religion, and this elevation of a thin abstraction to the throne of the universe is a case in point. Therefore, faith cannot deny the heart's experience, with its sense of guilt, and its inner spiritual witness, answering to the teachings of Scripture which many in the name of science assail. She refuses to evacuate the words sin and revelation of their content in order to bring them into harmony with current theories. But while we cannot now solve all contradictions faith assumes a solution. She is ever going forth

seeking truth in its wholeness, filled with glad confidence in the issue. Faith welcomes enlarging knowledge, scorns to blink facts, is only suspicious of negations and half-truths claiming the weight and authority of completed systems.

V

SLAVERY TO THE LETTER

FAITH confident in the reconciliation between the Word of God and scientific truth is confronted in these days with yet another difficulty which to many will seem more crucial than any thus far suggested. The Word of God, yes faith could indeed rest here if she were certified beyond dispute that God had spoken. But the title-deeds of Christianity are now assailed by a searching criticism which threatens the very foundations of belief. The foundations of belief,—the phrase is comprehensive. Were it not well to analyse our thought for the sake of clearness, lest we be

tripped by a blundering use of words? A foundation is that upon which the superstructure rests for its entire support. A faith which has been founded on a book may indeed shudder at the assaults of literary criticism. But a faith which rests in God needs stronger batteries for its dislodgment than the cleverness of scholars delving amidst the records of the past. Certainly the integrity of the Bible as a magically perfect book, without an historical flaw or a statistical blunder is threatened by modern criticism. Inspiration as conceived mechanically, the mere transference of Divine ideas through a passive medium, producing a book infallible in every literal detail, is a theory which in the light of facts argues a certain boldness to say the least in its advocate. But is the loss of this theory worth even a passing

regret? When examined closely it proves to be neither very dignified in its antecedents nor profound in its rationality. Nowhere does the Bible make such claims for itself. There is no hint of it in the practice of inspired writers who quote and adapt the words of Scripture with a freedom totally inconsistent with such slavish veneration of the letter. It is not to be found in the great classics of the early Church or in the decrees of her Œcumenical Councils. It emerges as a make-shift of protestantism seeking to find a substitute for an infallible Church in an infallible book. It is only another illustration of the ceaseless tendency of the human mind to discard the more rugged path of a virile faith for the easier method of blind trust in an oracular utterance. Breaking down superstitions is always

painful and generally more or less hazardous work. If you rob the weak man of his crutch he is apt to fall, but this is hardly valid reason for the healthy to hobble all their days on crutches. Men were inspired, not words. A varied literature, comprising almost every style of composition, has been wrought into a strange unity by the voice of the Living God which rings through all its utterances from the great Creation Hymn to the vision of the New Jerusalem coming down like a bride from heaven. The Bible is a revelation because it chronicles events in which God makes Himself known, and sanctifies all history because it gives the master-key to its interpretation. Is this conception harder to grasp than the narrower view? Does it seem to rob the word inspiration of its specific

content? At least it is more in accord with God's method as evinced in the slow and subtle processes of nature, and in the difficult mazes of the moral and spiritual experience of the individual soul. Such inspiration takes its place as a congruous factor in all the marvellous discipline of the spirit which forms the warp and woof of our social life. It is moreover an inspiration which lies beyond the reach of critical attack, for its proof lies in the Bible as we now possess it, aside from the question of its literary history however interesting and important the latter may be. This is not the place to discuss the soundness of the results of the much-vaunted critical method. Certainly its advocates are often characterized by a prejudice and bias which go far to invalidate their authority in the eyes of the humble seeker after

God. Extravagance of ingenuity often seems to usurp the place of historical insight. But taking criticism at its worst it does not touch the great results of Hebrew history, the supreme God-consciousness which swayed the nation's destiny and produced the mighty Messianic promise of the prophets. It does not touch the miracle of a literature centring in the thought of Incarnation. It does not touch the unique phenomenon of four relatively independent writers who have drawn the picture of the Perfect Man, flawless and beautiful beyond the utmost reach of poet's dream, which no temerity of unbelievers has ever dared assail. And we may venture to add that it has not yet even suggested a plausible explanation on merely natural grounds of the great crucial fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Yet forsooth faith trembles because ambitious critics are reconstructing Hebrew history, have doubts whether Levitical ordinances should be attributed to Moses, question concerning the date of the Book of Daniel, and ascribe certain prophecies to a deutero-Isaiah. A fetich had become the object of faith instead of God,—the fetich is destroyed and our faith fails us.

VI

A PLEA FOR BREADTH

WE have granted much, at least by implication, to the hypotheses of science and modern criticism. We have found that faith should not fear them, timidity indeed is always incompatible with a living faith. We would fain recognize a friend in the scientific and critical temper, in that it often tends to force faith from shibboleths to realities and drives her from theories to God. But premature pæans over restored amity are apt to end in disaster to one of the parties to the truce. There are deep underlying differences between the scientific and the religious temper

which should keep faith on her guard. The narrowness of certain schools of religious thought has become a proverbial reproach, but narrowness is no more admirable when it assumes the name and air of intellectual enlightenment. Science, for instance, claims to be the special champion of *facts*. She pits assured knowledge of facts against the dreams of faith and triumphantly boasts of her preëminence as a rational guide. Fact is a potent word to conjure with, it makes appeal both to the trained intellect and to the hard sense of the man in the street. But just what does the word connote? There is prevalent a rough and ready habit of taking it for granted that facts mean primarily physical phenomena and events. Faith has as profound a reverence for facts as science has. She dares not tamper with them nor per-

vert them. Her whole search is for an ever clearer and stronger grasp of facts. But the truth is that the most important facts in this world of ours refuse to lend themselves to scientific methods of analysis. Love, truth, righteousness, the insatiable yearning of the human heart for God, these facts constitute the very substance of all that is most real and significant in human history and environment. You may forget them if you will in your eager search after material ends, you may ignore them in your theories, and account time wasted which is spent in analysing their content and asserting their claim. Yet all the while you will be leaning on them, implicitly acknowledging their sway. They will in one form or another constitute the motive and the final aim of all your striving. Faith simply holds them

explicitly at their true worth, stakes her all on them, and so far as science would do them despite laughs to scorn the purblindness of the vaunted enlightener.

In line with the exclusiveness of its devotion to physical facts the scientific temper of the age is strangely inimical to mystery. It will tolerate no half-lights, it demands that all conceptions shall be brought out into the clearness of logical definition. Faith laying hold of a God whom it cannot explain, voicing itself in paradoxes, having recourse to terms in which thought must pass into adoration before it apprehends, this is regarded as the riot of an empty and meaningless mysticism. Strange, is it not, that science should be so short-sighted as to fail to see that she is thus in effect flouting her own position? Whether

we like it or not mystery presses us close on every side. If faith cannot formulate the idea of God in consistent and exhaustive statement, no more can science the idea of matter. She deals with certain phenomena, building up therewith the harmonious edifice of mutually interdependent laws and applying these laws to practical ends. Faith grounding moral and spiritual law on its apprehension of God produces the beautifully-ordered structure of right living and loving. In both cases the ultimate mystery remains unsolved. The human understanding is limited in its scope to things which can be compared. It can define phenomena and nothing more. The moment that we reach ultimate realities the logical faculty always fails us. Cause, force, life as metaphysical entities are as much enwrapt in mystery

as God Himself. Poetry like religion must needs resist this philistine crusade against the super-logical and the mysterious. The poetic imagination, which touches the simplest flower and makes it glow with a light which never was on land or sea, which marshals its words in so sweet a cadence that they sing themselves into the heart revealing profoundest truths by indirection, when analysed in terms of logic utterly escapes us. It works its will transforming life we know not how. There is a false and trivial poetic that distorts life and ministers to a morbid fancy. But we do not therefore condemn and disown the mightier triumphs of the imaginative power. So a true faith which glorifies and strengthens is not to pass under suspicion because men have been buoyed up by false faiths and irrational superstitions.

The realm of faith is indeed one of mystery, but this were a barren world if robbed of its half-lights, its alluring depths and wide horizons, too profound and too far-reaching to be brought completely within the compass of clear definition and perfect logical adjustment.

VII

PERSISTENT QUESTIONINGS

THERE is one truth which we must ever bear in mind. It will save us from much disappointment and confusion of spirit,—namely, that speculative doubts cannot be driven from the field once for all. Just as faith seems to have won for itself free space to rest a while and develope along lines of confidence and peace the old doubt may at any moment intrude again, either sharply confronting faith with some insuperable logical difficulty, or hanging sullenly on the horizon causing vague unrest and depression. It is not now a question of the obscuring of spiritual

insight by sin, rather of those limitations of our mental faculties which will not brook the free play of the spirit's powers without uttering their protest. Speculative doubt is thus one of the necessary conditions of our present estate, varying indeed in intensity according to temperament, education, habits of thought, but at any time possible and by no means a sure sign of dereliction in duty. It becomes thus of prime moment to clearly understand how we should treat a foe thus closely allied with our most intimate constitution. For according to the use or abuse of skepticism does it serve to strengthen or stultify faith.

Most men do not follow their doubts far enough to discover whither they ultimately lead. The advice sometimes given, "Crush your doubt,

drive it out by an act of will," is not only practically ineffective, but of dubious ethical value as well. The doubt so crushed returns to haunt one as the ghost of a possible truth. The driving out is a *tour de force* which may do violence to the delicate balance of complete moral sincerity. There are occasions indeed when in the interests of common-sense one is bound to crush his doubts by an act of will. When the tired brain indulges in a senseless iteration of worn-out arguments, to hearken in the distress of eternal indecision is mere weakness and irrationality. At such times one must act, though action trample doubts ruthlessly underfoot. But a healthy doubt which does not issue from tired nerves and a fagged brain should be faced boldly. The giant which loomed so large in the

mist will perhaps prove anything but a formidable foe seen at close quarters. But be the doubt great or small for once at least question it, drive it into a corner, push it pitilessly to its last conclusion. To remain passive, enwrapt in a half-doubt, is thoroughly enervating to the soul and unworthy intelligent manhood. Life itself may be wasted thus while one hangs in a state of unstable equilibrium harbouring doubts which he never takes the trouble to define or which he dares not combat. This following up of doubts to the bitter end has a tonic effect on the spirit. When doubt suggests difficulties as to the Christian revelation let it rob the world of the Gospel of the Incarnate God. But do not let it stop there, press it hard until it has piled up its objections to the doctrine of a

Loving Father, and the earth is left forlorn and orphaned, wheeling through space the victim of nought but inexorable law. But doubts may not logically stop even here,—let them play havoc with all the most cherished ideals of the heart. With God the sense of moral obligation must go, at least as soon as the voice of conscience is clearly understood to be only nature's blind sanction of methods which conserve the propagation of the race. Let your doubt sweep unopposed through the whole gamut of possible skepticisms until love and beauty and righteousness are explained away. There are patent objections to the spiritual interpretation of them all. And then when you have at last arrived at the goal and look about on the drear desert,—without meaning, without motive, without hope,—ask

yourself whether you can or care to live in the land of doubt. It is base to believe simply because you fondly long for a thing, but it does not follow that in the interests of reason we are bound to strip life bare of all that makes it worth the living because logic suggests a difficulty in the attitude of belief. Facing doubts is bracing exercise, but men are generally too timid or too lazy for the task. If they indulged in it a little oftener the glib expressions of popular unbelief would fall less frequently from thoughtless lips. The trivial doubt would be seen in the light of its awful implications, and we should hesitate to take the first step along a path fraught with such desolating terrors.

But to face doubts in safety it is needful that the spiritual faculty be strong and well-trained. There must

be some parity of energy between the combatants or the issue of the battle is a foregone conclusion. Of course, if our intellect be expert and cultivated and our spiritual nature be languid and undeveloped, it may well happen that doubt will prove too strong for us and we shall be swept from all our old moorings. The spiritual faculties, holding loftier place in the hierarchy of the soul's powers than the intellectual, need more careful and painstaking training, and they receive far less. Contrast the care bestowed on the mind's development from earliest years with the hap-hazard way in which the spirit is expected to learn its lessons. What wonder that the latter suffers detriment, that when the mind is that of matured manhood the spirit with all its wondrous potentiality is often inexpert and childish in its

feebleness of apprehension. Faith tasks all the energies of the soul. One does not believe by a mere wave of the hand, but every faculty of the spiritual nature goes forth in arduous service to lay hold of God. Expect not to triumph over all the difficulties which the discursive reason shall suggest unless your spirit has been exercised by a discipline at least as toilsome, as long-continued, as thorough and as enthusiastic as that which has characterized your mental training. And even so in the last analysis faith is curiously complicated with volition. As man is a rational and moral being he must ultimately choose whether he will believe or no. No coercion of irrefragable demonstration can be laid upon him, else faith were no longer faith. This aspect of the truth has been beautifully expressed in the defi-

nition of faith as "the great venture of the soul." Converging lines of argument, imperative demands of the heart, splendid certitudes of the Saints, these point toward God. But at the last the soul must launch itself in the abandonment of a mighty impulse of the will ere it finds God, lays hold of Him by faith and attains its rest. Will you choose thus to risk all for God's sake? In this lies the essence of moral probation.

4

VIII

PRIDE OF INTELLECT

IT is a blunder to suppose that if we had no doubts we should inevitably be filled with a triumphant faith. Many an intellectual scruple is but the cloak of moral perversity. We doubt in order to hide a sin which in itself renders faith impossible. Error of life breeds doubt and the doubt acts as palliative robbing regret of its poignancy. The human heart is something of a sophist and will play wonderful tricks with itself for the sake of ease and freedom from self-reproach.

Pride hinders faith more effectually than any array of skeptical argument.

Man has come to trust his reason with a blind devotion and scorns any counter-claim of the spirit as guide to truth. Schism is thus introduced into the very citadel of the conscious life, a penal consequence, it would seem, of that first sin when man chose the fruit of the tree of knowledge in preference to the path of humble and implicit obedience to the Will of God. Yet when we consider the splendour of man's intellectual achievement the growth of this overweening pride seems far from unnatural. Reason has made man king over the lower creation. With restless and insatiable curiosity the mind has gone forth seeking truth, never satisfied until it has brought the manifold into unity and read system, order and harmony into the formless content of crude experience. It has searched the height

and the depth and found the farthest star amenable to its laws. Civilization is largely the fruit of its conquests. Who shall venture to put a limit to its future acquisitions as the ages roll on? Obscurantism is out of date, it is time for religion to recognize reason frankly and generously as an ally. Exact methods of thought, an eager spirit of investigation, a philosophical temper which weighs evidence scrupulously, these are some of reason's gifts inestimably valuable to the spiritual development of the race. And yet the fact remains that "the trained intellect is apt to eat out the child's heart, while the 'except ye become like little children' stands unrepealed."

How often scholarly enthusiasm, immersed in keen and unremitting mental activity rests satisfied in itself.

It says in effect, this is enough, no higher aim, no fuller joy or richer experience can be even desired. How often, lower down in the scale of intelligence, a general sense of refinement and culture differentiates its possessor from the mass of mankind whose judgments he scorns and whose experiences are a matter of indifference. Intellectualism ignores the fact that there is something deeper and more universal in the soul of man than fineness of taste or processes of reasoning. To say that in matters spiritual the peasant and the savant must needs start from the same level, is scouted as an absurd claim. Yet the keenest wit, the profoundest erudition, the nicest refinement of thought can in themselves bring one no nearer the goal of faith than the ignorance of the boor. Purity of heart, ingenuousness

of moral purpose, eager longing for God, these are the prerequisites of faith and are spread broadcast in the world without reference to the intellectual barriers which separate between man and man. Learned and unlearned must stoop and enter by the same door into faith's realm. But the exclusiveness bred of culture shrinks from such fellowship. And the sophistication of a dominantly intellectual temper cries out against this blind trust in the primitive instincts of the human heart.

Faith advances by a spiritual process in marked contrast to intellectual methods. The heart of man longs for God. Faith straightway acts, the soul in which faith moves casts itself on God. It utters itself in prayer, because this is the child's instinct. It does not pause to analyse motives and

weigh immediate results because it is rejoicing in spiritual compensations which bring a sense of peace and reconciliation. The intellect in meeting the same demand of the heart halts and temporizes. It would fain know more of God before it trusts Him. It entangles itself in speculative arguments concerning His existence, it refuses to advance a step before it sees its way clearly. It would understand perfectly the rationale of prayer before it prays. Pride refuses to let the heart take the child's way of quick and unquestioning impulse. Faith is always the well-spring of action. While the intellect is elaborating moral ideals, faith does the righteous deed. It is ever a threatening danger of the intellect that exercised in abstractions it will come to rest satisfied with them, while life which

is *conduct* will be relegated to a secondary place. Ideas can never emerge into the realm of reality save through action.

The movements of the spirit lie hidden in the most sacred passages of experience. They are sensitive to a breath of suspicion, shrink from intellectual analysis, quickly cease to make themselves felt when their rights are denied or questioned. They can scarcely be named without suffering abatement. If the intellect demand complete control, the spiritual powers are easily repressed and soon become atrophied by disuse. They thrive only in an atmosphere of humility and simplicity of heart. One must stoop to enter the door which leads to the highest. The way is narrow and the gate is strait.

IX

PRIDE OF ORTHODOXY

THERE is an even more deadly pride of knowledge, however, than that which is bred by the naturalistic temper. If it is folly to scoff at all experience save that which is amenable to a purely intellectual process, it is doubly fatuous to permit the cheap complacencies of the intellect to steal into the sphere of our religious thought. To know all about Almighty God is perhaps a more hopeless state of mind than Agnosticism. God mapped out with the precision of a mathematical demonstration; Jesus Christ and His Atoning Work fully explicated with the nicety of a scien-

tific definition; spiritual life elaborated according to the precedents of casuistry until a rule of thumb determines every problem beyond a peradventure;—here is nutriment for pride which shall o'ertop all other vanities of earth. Theology is indeed the Queen of sciences. Based upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ the development of doctrine in the Church has safeguarded the fundamental truths of the Gospel from the rash and perverse speculations of men. The Catholic Faith is a beautifully ordered system, in which the mind as well as the heart of man may find infinite delight and satisfaction. There is a legitimate certitude in which the faithful rejoice amidst the shifting winds of human opinion. But a dogma may be true without being exhaustive. Though it be based on a fact of revelation the medium

of its expression is still the fallible language of earth. Finite terms cannot compass infinite truth. At best a doctrinal definition is but the stammering of children striving to utter the ineffable. When definition serves to empty Divine truth of its awe and mystery it is doing the soul a sorry service. Better a reverence which dare not formulate lest it derogate from truth's dignity than the shallow self-assurance which would sound the depths of eternity with the plummet of a glib metaphysical statement. A petty pride in creeds and orthodoxies is utterly inconsistent with the stern seriousness of faith's task. The spirit must seek God,—faith cannot rest in words though they be the most hallowed formulas of the ages. When the mind has learned all that it can about God, when doctrine and disci-

pline have been most clearly apprehended, it still remains for the soul to enter upon the knowledge of God, that knowledge truly accounted one of the Spirit's crowning gifts, for no effort of man unaided can climb the heights of such transcendent experience. To be proud of the heritage of Catholic Christians, in the lower sense of Pharisaic contentment, is to wrest the privilege of our position to our own destruction. Opportunity is only the obverse side of responsibility. If we be saved by the authority of the Church from following the will-o'-the-wisp of passing opinions, this is but to enable us to press further and further along the path of a triumphant spiritual progress. No formula, however exact, can give experimental knowledge of the truth. The formula which leads to nothing beyond itself

is nought but words after all. If we repeat the formula with our lips alone it is as efficacious spiritually as to repeat the childish doggerel of nursery-days. Yet men are sometimes proud of the mere utterance and scorn those who have not learned the same lesson by rote. If faith should presume to win some splendid victory, voicing itself in a beautiful deed of sacrifice or a notable sanctity, while yet it had failed to start from the vantage-ground of orthodox statement, it were esteemed doubtful loyalty to accord it due meed of honour.

The Church is the home of faith. She is the guardian of the promise which allures faith to its task,—her mission is to guide, support and cherish. But the highest is capable of the worst abuse. So full and rich is the Church's heritage that there is

always danger lest the means be mistaken for the end, lest the soul be ensnared in multiplicity of method. Spirituality is *life*,—it forges its way to practical results laying hold of the commonest material and binding it to God. It transmutes all things into helps to holiness, not creeds alone but the hurry and anxiety of the work-a-day world, bitter temptations and sorrows, loves and hates, all that goes to make up the confused content of human existence. We must needs beware how we suffer this mighty force of a living faith to be lulled to sleep amidst the satisfactions which accrue from clear-cut doctrinal statement, and the well-ordered decencies of an outward service.

X

SPIRITUAL PRIDE

WHEN the eyes of the prophet Isaiah were unsealed in the Temple on Mount Zion, he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." St. John in Patmos in the presence of the glorified Christ "fell at His feet as dead," until He laid His hand upon him and said "Fear not." The rapture of insight must always humble the soul of the seer. Petty vanities and self-appreciations shrivel and die when the glory of God is made mani-

fest. If egotism persistently intrudes, if the emphasis of individuality is pronounced in our spiritual exercise so that the thought ever recurs, "Lo, *I* am thus privileged,"—the soul as yet knows little of the enfranchisement of faith.

Egotism is natural to man. The whole process of rational development centres around this little point of self-consciousness. The constant impact of experience forcing the soul to distinguish between the self and the not-self serves to define and accentuate individuality. Moreover self-love is natural, and by no means obnoxious to unqualified condemnation. It prompts to many a useful ambition,—in the form of a legitimate self-confidence it is the mainspring of half the forceful action of the world. But there are countervailing currents

in life which may not be neglected. Spirituality consists in the discovery of a new centre other than self and a corresponding readjustment of interest and impulse. Love overleaps the hard barriers of individuality and binds man to man in a larger corporate life. It is the paradox of the spirit that in thus denying self one finds his true self. From the isolation of mere selfhood one passes to the richer fruitions of personality, which can only be realized through glad recognition of the infinite network of relations which bind men together. In the self-centred sphere of the purely natural life lies hid all the wretched mockery of the subtlest forms of pride. It is a crude blunder to conceive that spiritual pride inevitably manifests itself in an ostentatious parade of devotion and overt scorn of others. The essence

of Pharisaism does not consist in broad phylacteries or prayers at the corners of the streets. It lies rather in a low standard fairly well fulfilled, in a generally-diffused sense of satisfaction which forbids progress by crushing the motive-power at its source. Faith is ever rendered restless by glimpses of unreached heights of holiness. Past achievement is as though it were not in view of the boundless horizon which stretches before. Faith lays hold of the faintest aspiration of the spirit, for this contains within itself untold promise of advance. If the soul is satisfied, this is simply evidence of the absence of faith. No man rests satisfied with self who beholds God. Easy-going contentment and the heavenly vision are of necessity incompatible and mutually exclusive.

He whose egotism asserts itself in

what passes for prayer and praise and adoration is like the provincial who carries his native town with him however far he may journey over the face of the earth. He cannot learn new truth for his eye sees only what it brings with it, everything is distorted by narrow preconceptions and pretentious ignorance. We must offer the freshness and simplicity of the child's heart that we may receive true impressions of that far land where the spirit journeys seeking God. A morbid self-consciousness imports the murky atmosphere of earth into heaven itself. God cannot pour His grace into the soul because it is full of its own conceits and prepossessions. One may even end by worshipping self instead of God, the last and most degrading idolatry to which human nature is subject.

But what of the vestiges of self-satisfaction, the subtle movements of spiritual pride, which remain after one has sought most faithfully to root out these hindrances to the free life of the spirit? Direct onslaught fails, for the more earnestly one tries to expel self-consciousness by thinking of it the more is he caught in its meshes. Forgetfulness of self in religious exercise is conditional upon the habit of self-forgetfulness. And the habit of self-forgetfulness can never be acquired by confining effort to one particular department of life. From the sensitiveness which shrinks from contact with aught that jars upon our taste, to the most repulsive forms of selfishness, life must be purged of egotism by the grace of God before faith can bear the soul out of the vicious circle of individualism into the free and

bracing air of the Divine life and love. Virtues are inextricably interwoven with one another. All efforts at a strict analysis of their relative importance and precedence are bound to fail. The soul learns love by dint of believing, and the blessed fruit of faith in God is shown in gentleness and self-sacrifice toward men. But it is equally true that faith issues from love, that the first lessons in that humility which is requisite to faith are learned by self-restraint and self-forgetfulness in the commonest duties of life. A wide outlook is the best preservative from vanity and self-conceit. Open your eyes to truth and you will cease to loom up to your imagination in such grotesque disproportion. Next to the vision of God the vision of the spiritual relationships and responsibilities which encompass us can best perform

this gracious task of enlightenment, if indeed the two can be separated even in thought. For God is in these ties which bind man to his fellows, and in the power to live in them worthily, and if need be die for them, lies the very impress of the Divine likeness which makes us sons of God.

XI

WORLDLINESS

AN opposition between the Church and the World finds place in Scripture, easy to grasp if we rest content with vague generalities, but more difficult when we attempt to define our thought accurately. Interpretation of the opposing terms has swung between wide extremes. The ascetic mode is at least summary. The world is the whole material framework of life. All that savours of natural disposition and tendency is at enmity with God. Spirituality consists in holding by earth as lightly as possible, crushing as far as may be all appetites of the body, withdrawing

from all converse with a perverted social order. The merit of this system consists chiefly in its simplicity. As a working method we cannot deny that it has produced wonderful results at certain times and in certain places. But it ignores too many healthy instincts of the heart and rests on too narrow an induction to approve itself as an adequate interpretation of the Gospel. The Bible as a whole gives one the impression of being anything but a manual of ascetic theology. Others again would fain vaporize away the contrast by assuming that the world is simply synonymous with the evil which exists in the world. This looks a little like begging the question. Certainly the scriptural point of view can be brought into harmony with it only by a forced exegesis of many a crucial text. Even as a work-

ing hypothesis it is apt to produce an Epicurean type of Christianity curiously ineffective in comparison with the triumphs of Saints and martyrs. One shrinks from entering the lists with a new theory, yet it is needful to fix some clear meaning to the much-abused term worldliness. Perhaps there is something of truth in the most opposed and perverted interpretations and their error consists only in their narrowness and externality, in a failure to grasp the full spiritual reach of the principles which they enunciate.

In popular parlance worldliness, like most terms of opprobrium, is used with extreme laxity. Men rarely take the trouble to define it, preferring to bandy it freely as an easy method of passing judgment on those whose pleasures take on a form unattractive or more likely unattainable to the

critic. Half mankind would seem to account worldliness a matter of costly clothes, elaborate entertainments, expensive sports and the other amenities of society so called. Much cheap criticism of this sort would be forever silenced if the question were consistently pressed home,—Would the world be better, mankind brought nearer God, if these assumed evils were once and for all obliterated? If civilization as a whole is evil, if its advance thwarts the progress of God's truth, let us frankly recognize the fact and pit ourselves against it. But this much is plain, worldliness as popularly construed is part and parcel of civilization, and if the former is the foe of God then so is the latter. The complexity of the social life inveighed against is inextricably enwrought with commerce and all allied pursuits.

Economic prosperity, the advancement of art and letters, the cultivation of manners, these are all dependent to a large degree on a differentiation of classes which implies that some shall live in leisure, wealth and luxury. A strong plea can indeed be made against the drift of modern social life. If one fix his eye on one side of the shield only it were easy to fall into bitter invective. Ostentatious display which demoralizes fineness of taste, enervating luxury which saps ambition and makes mind and body soft and finical, foolish vanities, engrossing frivolities, these are rife enough. But they are only excrescences on a system which seems in itself an essential factor in social progress. And meanwhile worldliness is by no means the most apposite term for describing this abuse of wealth. Nor should we forget that in the higher

forms of social life there is even a vein of idealism. The conventions which restrain all rudeness of speech or manner, which enforce reserve, which prompt to gracious if trifling sacrifices, do much to smooth the rough places of life and increase the sum total of happiness. Amiel calls society "a form of poetry; the cultivated classes deliberately recompose the idyll of the past and the buried world of Astræa. Paradox or no, these fugitive attempts to reconstruct a dream whose only end is beauty represent confused reminiscences of an age of gold haunting the human heart, or rather aspirations toward a harmony of things which everyday reality denies to us, and of which art alone gives us a glimpse."

The truth is that worldliness has very little to do with the outward trappings of life. It is as common

among the poor as the rich, its home is as often a hut as a palace. Our Lord suggests the true scope of the danger in the parable of the sower. The tares which choked the good seed are the cares as well as the riches of this life. Worldliness is a habit of mind which does not reveal itself exclusively in any one type of action. It can render any estate of life inimical to spiritual progress. It deals with the same facts as faith but wrests them to less worthy ends. For every fact in the world has a twofold aspect, the one material and temporal, the other spiritual and eternal. If the former appeals to us habitually and predominantly we are worldly, if the latter we are open to the access of faith. A blade of grass means to the farmer an insignificant fraction of the load of hay worth so many dollars in the market. To the

scientific student it lends itself to botanical classification and its delicate structure serves to coördinate it with the methods of growth which obtain in the whole vast flora of the world. To the poet it may reveal visions of beauty and suggest spiritual imports utterly hidden from the common eye.

"I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on
that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
As once I passed, into my heart conveyed
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amidst the uneasy thoughts which filled
my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the
grief
That passing shows of being leave be-
hind,

Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain
Nowhere dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of faith. I turned away,
And walked along my road in happiness."

How much more then must this hold true of moral facts. The family, the very basis of the whole social organism, may be apprehended in a hard mechanical fashion or it may be grasped vitally and spiritually. It means to one man a hampering restriction of individual liberty, or it is the spur to irksome labor, or at best a selfish resort from loneliness. To another it is the type on earth of the Divine life in heaven, reflecting all those mutual relationships which constitute man a spirit and lead up to fel-

lowship with God. A man is worldly or the reverse according to the interpretation which he instinctively puts upon the facts of his environment. And that interpretation will ultimately leave its impress upon his every word and act.

The Church was established as the refuge of the soul from worldliness. The *ecclesia*, the called-out,—from the time when Abraham was bidden come forth from his home and his kindred, there has always existed in the world according to the Divine purpose an assemblage of those who have heard God's voice and left all to follow Him. The lower aspect of their earthly estate was henceforth to be to them but a passing show, a place of pilgrimage, while they journeyed steadfastly toward that abiding city, the true home of the soul, that underlying spiritual verity

which is shadowed forth in all the deeper bearings of the commonest facts of life. But Jesus Christ has taught us that even the Church Catholic of this later dispensation is to be likened to a net bringing to land both bad and good. Worldliness has made sore inroads upon the realm specially designed as the home of faith. The history of the Church offers one long illustration of this grievous defection. The Church has of necessity an outward organization. It takes its place with its rules, its mechanism, its outward and visible signs, among the physical facts, so to speak, of the world. And it thus becomes straightway possible to interpret it in a worldly spirit and stultify faith. Parochial machinery seems to lend itself with peculiar facility to this abuse. Worldly standards of success, the

parish viewed as a business venture, sermons as the subject of critical comment, ritual as ministering solely to an æsthetic taste,—it is verily the transformation of the Church into the world, and all the more dangerous because men fool themselves into thinking that thus they are exercising faith and saving their souls.

Now, we cannot reform the world, whatever dreams of knight-errantry youth may have indulged in. We cannot cleanse the Church at large as our Lord drove the traffickers from His Father's House. But it does lie open to us to make a beginning in the reformation of ourselves. We may cultivate the heavenly temper, the attitude of faith, in our own hearts. But this temper must hold sway at all times and in all places, sporadic effort is largely wasted. A man cannot be

unworldly one day in the week and worldly the other six; unworldly in church and worldly in the home, the shop and the street. God must be the chief aim and the motive power behind *all* our actions. To seek the spiritual significance, the Divine meaning, behind every fact of life, and consecrate our energy to its furtherance and triumph, this is the exercise of faith. The lower and worldly motive has the advantage of a long start with most men. Childhood caught glimpses of the glory, but fond parents did their best by example and precept to dull the edge of the inchoate spiritual impulse. Youth and young manhood,—in the first flush of living what wonder that the immediate and superficial joy should engross thought and claim every ardour! Crushing arrears are thus piled up

through the stupid exemption bestowed upon the young from all share in the lifelong battle which should be waged against the enemy of faith. Unworldliness postponed until old age has robbed appetite of its zest, is a fatuous dream impossible of fulfilment. Quick enthusiasm and ardent endeavour are more necessary to its attainment than for the reaping of any earthly harvest. A hard task is laid upon us, the whole of life is none too long for learning the lesson. Heavenly mindedness will not mark life with any eccentric change of manner. It will indeed revolutionize motives and thus subtly remould action, but an unworldly temper works from within, not from without, and is essentially independent of dress and *entourage*. It consists in loving *the best*, in interpreting the humblest fact according

to the highest category, in seeking the spiritual content of each circumstance of everyday life. God presses close in common things,—the vision of the Presence alone gives free course to faith.

XII

THE EASE-LOVING HEART

FAITH at its inception demands an act of will. In the last analysis a man must choose whether he will believe or no. This does not, of course, mean that at any moment, irrespective of intellectual scruples or moral characteristics, a man is free arbitrarily to say, I believe. But granted a balance of probability in favour of a certain belief, granted a normally developed moral nature, there still remains an act of submission, a deliberate acceptance, before the soul can grasp a spiritual verity and rest in it as true. Mere passivity will not suffice. The will must be fired with the eager

desire to accept the truth; this constitutes one aspect of what the schoolmen were wont to call "the grace of congruity." Without it the conditions requisite to the free working of the spirit are not fulfilled.

Now there are many forces which make against this naïveté of the soul whereby it ever stands alert to carry forward the spirit's behests. Freedom of choice is not an endowment which remains equally effective whatever the course of a man's moral experience. We must posit it as man's prerogative or abandon the claim that he is a moral agent. But unless safeguarded, cultivated, treated with reverence, it may become so weak that it is wellnigh if not completely lost. Necessity which rules in the whole sphere of nature will come in like a flood, dominating life save as man accustoms himself to

rise above nature into the free air of the spirit's life. Freedom's throne is abdicated when the soul suffers itself to be played upon by every impulse and incitement of the phenomenal world. The illusion of free choice may still linger, but the man is a slave, he does not rule but is ruled, every seeming choice issuing inevitably from a character in which base motives and carnal desires are supreme. All men have drifted down this path to some extent, all are more or less enslaved, hence the assertion of freedom always involves something of effort at the first. And from this effort the ease-loving heart shrinks back. It has not exercised itself in hardness, it has been wont in minor things to follow the line of least resistance, it is not trained with quick intuition of the right to make momentous decisions. Hence when

confronted with the alternative of faith or doubt it hangs in a state of unstable equilibrium, cannot summon the energy requisite to a frank and trustful acceptance, it is easier to wait. In the affairs of this world hesitation in reaching a decision is apt to meet with a salutary rebuff. The world either cries out upon the craven or silently goes on its way, leaving him stranded among the manifestly unsuccessful and impotent. Its awards are evident and convincing to the dullest. We must choose and that quickly or be adjudged incompetents in the race. But no such irresistible pressure is brought to bear in the case of spiritual choice. Decision may be delayed indefinitely and the world notes it not. Whatever spiritual results ensue are too hidden and subtle to appeal to the ordinary imagination. God keeps His own

counsel and His eternal awards leave no trace in the lower sphere of worldly attainment and success. Thus men are lured into a sense of false security. A question of eternal import has been left undecided, and ere one knows it neutrality has hardened into rejection: he who is not for God is against Him.

The shrinking from this effort of the will in faith sometimes disguises itself under the specious plea of intellectual honesty. The pure intellect works along lines of necessity. Demonstration and the unavoidable sequence of logic enforce recognition. Truth should be proved,—are we not irrational in foregoing this prerequisite in the acceptance of any doctrine concerning God? But though we wait until the end of time the proof even of God's existence will not be

forthcoming. How should the infinite be proved by a finite process? How should the ground of all proof Himself be made the object of proof? While men are waiting, however, it becomes harder day by day for the spirit to rise to its task. It has been pushed to one side, its dignity disowned, the validity of its claims ignored. The spirit has grown lax and inert from disuse, the exertion of believing has grown too great for its strength.

The primal act of faith is in itself hard to make, but it is harder the more clearly its true significance becomes apparent. Faith is a door, not a goal. It opens the way to a thousand new difficulties which the soul never knew until it believed. A dim apprehension of all that an honest faith entails affrights those prone to ease and

self-seeking. It is a childish error to conceive that one can believe once for all; as well say that one can love once for all. Faith is the soul's grasp on God, that hold may slacken, aye, be lost, save as the eager endeavour of the spirit makes it firmer day by day. Faith never remains stationary, it is ever increasing or diminishing. It demands sacrifice of every kind as the condition of its growth. The spirit must be nerved to brave effort or it will inevitably flag in its task.

The charge of sloth probably awakens little compunction in most minds. Sloth seems to men the last of vices which can be laid to their charge. Are they not overwhelmed with work in this bustling age, worn out in body and mind by the stress of business or study, social or philanthropic duties?

But ardent activity in one department of life by no means excludes the possibility that in others we are lazy and handicapped by deadly inertia. The ceaseless effort of the man of affairs is quite compatible with dulness and apathy in matters of literature and speculative thought. The higher intellectual life may lie utterly stagnant while the logical faculty as applied to business or politics is wearing itself out under constant strain. The same is true of the intellectual as related to the spiritual life. The mind may be active in pondering the gravest problems, may even apply itself to religious themes with unremitting interest, while the spirit lies dormant and lulled in sloth shrinks from the lightest effort. It is a popular fallacy that the demands of conscience are satisfied if we only do something with suffi-

cient earnestness. We cannot thus offset one activity against another in rough and ready fashion. If it should after all prove to be true that there is "one thing needful," it were a sorry plea as extenuating the guilt of neglect that we did another thing zealously which happened to lie more in line with inclination. It is perhaps easier to work with the hands than to think,—but beware of the sloth of the mind or your craftsmanship will become poor and perfunctory. It is easier to think than to pray,—but beware lest sloth of spirit render your thinking hard and superficial, the mere empty play of the speculative faculty. Religious emotion is often contrasted with religious work as fairly representative of the path of ease over against the path of praiseworthy effort. But a more pregnant comparison would be

to set *life* over against work. Emotion is rather protean in character, it is always difficult to estimate justly its religious quality. The fruit of faith is life, not emotion, and it is unquestionably harder to live the spiritual life than to do religious works. Hence there is always danger of men making shift to substitute work for life. To grasp a spiritual fact and assimilate it by a spiritual process requires the fullest and freest activity of every power with which God has endowed us. No formal and outward accomplishment can be accepted in lieu of this the true work of the spirit.

Faith is a tireless foe of the ease and comfort which the natural heart craves. It awakes in the soul a moral sensitiveness which will brook no excuse as palliating a wrong. The life of faith is thus of necessity the life of peni-

tence, and penitential discipline is hard. Faith moreover encourages every noble aspiration which stirs never so faintly in the heart. Love of ease, summoning as its ally what is sometimes miscalled common-sense, is for crushing aspirations as idle dreams. But faith will not suffer them to die. They are the spur which keeps the soul from slackening in its pursuit of the highest. A certain restlessness results, no successful accomplishment can completely allay it. Happiness in the lower construction of the term, happiness as synonymous with satisfied desire and life free from friction, would seem beyond the reach of faith. Joy is indeed faith's surest fruition, only the joy and peace of faith are consonant with the keenest pain and the sternest hardship. What wonder that men shrink at the first

from a path so rugged and beset with difficulties.

As prayer is the most characteristic exercise of the spirit in this toilsome life of faith, it will serve as illustration of the call to banish sloth would we believe in God. At the outset prayer demands sacrifice, sacrifice of which the unfailing ritual sacrifice of all ages is type and symbol. This sacrifice begins in little things,—the giving up of time, the surrendering of the loved pursuit, that space may be won for spiritual exercise. And the sacrifice passes on and up to that complete oblation of the will which demands for its accomplishment the whole vigour of manhood, inspired and sustained by the grace of God. The oblation of the will is of the very essence of prayer, without it prayer is impossible. And this oblation is

bound by subtlest fibres to every motive and every act which lies in the past or the future of the soul's life. It is fraught with the pangs of contrition in view of past sin, it is filled with sincerest purpose to do the right in every crisis which shall confront the soul in time to come. Based thus on sacrifice prayer demands a concentration of body, mind and spirit more intense than any other experience. Converse with thoughtful men is no easy task, distraction must be avoided or we shall surely be tripped, the imagination must be fired, the mastery of apt words kept well in hand. Converse with God can hardly be less exacting. It is a truism, but sometimes the fact ought to flash home to us with appalling force, that as our prayer is written in our heart for God to read, every vain and trivial

thought which courses through it at such moments is as integral a part of the record as the solemn words framed by our lips. The above comparison with earthly converse does not, of course, imply that the same intellectual training is requisite for prayer as for success in learned or brilliant discourse among men. The simplest and most unlettered among men are often better fitted by a purely spiritual culture for the intense concentration of prayer than are the highly educated. The peasant who knelt by the hour before the Blessed Sacrament and when questioned by the curé replied, "I am looking at Jesus Christ and He is looking at me,"—had doubtless attained a complete mastery of his faculties in the self-abandonment of prayer which the most learned theologian might envy. But whatever

of intellectual power and facility we possess must be consecrated by the liveliest effort in this service of God. It is unworthy the sacredness of the occasion that we should offer other than our best. Even though we be carried far beyond the region of clear intellectual conceptions in the higher phases of praise and adoration, the door to this Holy of Holies does not lie through the wastes of slipshod carelessness and mental indifference. And then what shall be said of the perseverance of prayer,—that long-continuing patience which Jesus Christ has taught us wins special blessing from God? We weary all too quickly, looking impatiently for some immediate fruitage like children who dig up their seeds before sun and moisture have had time to do their work. God's processes in nature are slow, so slow that

the imagination fails us when we try to measure the æons which have gone to the making of this little planet. Growth, physical and mental and moral, advances by imperceptible stages toward maturity. The true end of prayer can never be gained by a hurried petition. It is not possible thus to do honour to God Almighty, nor is it thus that the soul grows in the knowledge of Him. But perseverance taxes the spirit sorely, and for the most part sloth wins the day with men.

There is a certain glamour of attractiveness in some sins. Sloth is pure stupidity and dulness. We resent the charge when so irrational and senseless an ineptitude is laid at our door. Yet judging by any reasonable standard one can hardly deny that the Christianity prevalent in the world to-

day is of a somewhat easy-going type, however individuals may shift the blame. And we know that this was the estate of the Laodicean Church upon which our Lord passed that condemnation of biting scorn,—is there any severer recorded in Scripture?—"Because thou art neither cold nor hot I will spue thee out of my mouth."

XIII

MERE MORALITY

A STRANGE confusion prevails as to the relation between righteousness and spirituality which tends to discredit the claims of faith in the eyes of hard-headed practical men. The ethics of Christianity are supposed to assert that a peculiar virtue attaches to good deeds which are allied with orthodox statement, or with certain phases of religious emotion, and this entirely apart from their intrinsic moral quality. In other words there is a religious sense of the word goodness which is to be sharply distinguished from mere mo-

rality. The latter may be useful in temporal affairs, indeed has a kind of dignity of its own, but is of little moment with relation to eternity. Meanwhile religious goodness can to a degree dispense with morality, it must not break too openly with its humble earthly counterpart, but there are mysterious spiritual processes which condone a certain breach of the moral law, and a magical efficacy resides in faith which makes the believer good in a sense which has nothing to do with the prosaic interpretations of righteousness current on earth. Mere morality,—the phrase on the lips of Evangelical Christendom smacks of condescending pity for the blindness of mankind which hopes by this path to approve itself before God. Of course, one can read a rational meaning into the phrase. If it be used as

synonymous with the mere outward appearance of morality, a skin-deep righteousness, the tone of scorn implied is justified. But then this poor simulacrum of virtue is not righteousness at all. It were better to avoid ambiguous terms,—call it hypocrisy and have done with it. Something other than this, however, generally provokes the use of the words. A misconception disastrous in its falsity underlies them. The story of Jacob and Esau offers a favourite theme for preachers, and the interpretation too often put upon that history is a perfect illustration of the point in question. Esau is recognized as exemplifying all natural virtues,—a grievous misreading of facts, by the way. Jacob is acknowledged to have been a liar and a thief, unscrupulous in his dealings and unlovely in character.

But Jacob forsooth was a spiritual man and so God loved him. Wherein lay the essence of his spirituality we are not told. Apparently it was a kind of mystical deposit quite unrelated to such mundane interests as probity and honour. And the practical conclusion drawn from this marvellous thesis is simply,—no matter how good you are it is all worthless in God's sight if you lack an indefinite something which enables you to see visions and feel intensely that you are a favourite with the Almighty. Now Jacob is undoubtedly a hero of faith, it would be easy to point a moral in view of the popular estimate which often prefers Esau to Jacob. His character amidst much of earthliness possessed spiritual traits which made him peculiarly loved of God. But he became a patriarch of the

chosen people, a prince having power with God, by a growth in righteousness. From the vision at Bethel to the long night of wrestling with the angel, Jacob's character was being chastened by toil and suffering. From a very imperfect and sinful man he was being fashioned into a saint. Meanwhile Esau offered no traits capable of such development. He stood still while Jacob advanced. Esau was not a good man, only an impulsive and good-natured man, and the difference is radical. Potentially and in the deeper lines of his character Jacob was from the outset a more moral man than Esau, and therefore God chose him as His servant. Righteousness and spirituality are but two aspects of one and the same inner movement. Religion and morality, however divorced in the popular mind, are as a

matter of fact eternal correlates. So-called religions which have failed to recognize this truth have always sooner or later lost their hold over the human heart, and have survived merely as empty superstitions. How indeed could it be otherwise? Conscience is the voice of God, the moral imperative uttering its supreme command within us claims an authority which cannot be less than Divine. Righteousness is the will of God. Religion is the glad recognition of that will as the will of a Loving Father, and the earnest endeavour to serve Him. Spirituality is the consciousness of fellowship and the joy of converse. How can we rejoice in fellowship with God unless we honour Him? How honour except we serve Him? And any service is but mockery if we fail to heed His voice

and humbly obey His behests. The wordy warfare waged between the advocates of justification by faith only, and believers in the necessity of good works to salvation, is of interest historically. As a vital issue it long since ceased to have meaning. Logically faith must precede works, practically they are coincident. Faith cannot exist for a moment without bearing fruit in righteousness. And conversely true righteousness can issue only from faith, however imperfect the verbal expression in which that faith may voice itself. To pit the two against each other as rival claimants is to miss the true spiritual significance of both.

Faith in theological language is the gift of God, a supernatural grace infused into the soul. By the grace of God freely bestowed manhood is

restored to that estate of spiritual communion from which Adam fell by wilful sin. Many shrink in these days from formal theological statement as though it were purely doctrinaire, foreign to the realities of life and the soul's more intimate experiences. This is largely due to a complete failure in apprehending the spiritual truth which underlies the theoretical statement. Catholic theology is not fine-spun theorizing but an attempt to express in clear language the deepest insight of the Saints. Its doctrines were lived before they were formulated. Surely if the will of God lies immediately behind every physical fact of the Universe,—and who would to-day venture to champion the mechanical conceptions of deism?—God must be immanent in every spiritual move-

ment within the soul. How should man know Him save by the revelation of His Spirit? Will man venture to claim the little plot of his own spiritual experience, where faith springs up, as solely exempt from the immediate Divine action,—just the very sphere in which God is made most clearly manifest? When we speak of faith as dependent ultimately on an act of will, this is but to emphasize one of its subjective aspects. It is merely another way of saying that the sanctified will appropriates the Divine gift. Faith is entrusted to us to accept or reject, to use or abuse, according to our wisdom or folly. The primal condition of the culture of faith is "willing to do the will of God." Without this the first advance of faith is impossible. Every act of sin violates faith, when we sin we

cease to have faith. Not that faith is utterly lost, but its activity is at least temporarily in abeyance. Continuance in sin may kill it. Only a strangely perverted system could ever have conceived that a man could at the same time be morally bad and yet in a truly religious sense believe in God. We are told that "the devils believe and tremble," but we do not attribute to them a saving faith.

But we must beware of drawing the line between good and bad as the world draws it. Popular estimates of character, while sometimes endowed with a kind of instinctive justice, reach conclusions by methods which are too crude to have much weight in the determination of a pure morality. The fundamental principle of the world's judgment has reference to the conser-

vation of society. In the largest construction of this standard there lies a profound truth of morals. But in the narrower sense in which it is commonly used the test is worthless save as applied to coarsely utilitarian ends. The world's range of vision is short, it asks what is good for society now, the future is largely disregarded. That is beneficial which tends to an obvious and material advantage. The world moreover considers deeds only, it asks no questions concerning motive. A good-natured generosity may be as valuable in its eyes as the finest fruits of a Christ-like sacrifice. Many of the subtler sins entirely escape notice, unless indeed they happen to eventuate in what is manifestly disagreeable and offensive. Envy, spiritual pride, self-satisfaction, these meet with no condemnation in comparison with a

forbidding manner or a breach of conventional etiquette. A true spiritual estimate has little in common with this summary and superficial mode of forming judgments. Its standard is character as revealed not alone in action but in the most hidden thoughts and inclinations of the heart. Not infrequently it reverses the world's judgment completely, recognizing that a man may be outwardly above reproach yet morally worthless, eaten up with selfishness and lust and vanity. The most tremendous example of the drastic and revolutionary character of a spiritual judgment is set forth in our Lord's attitude toward the Pharisees, and toward publicans and sinners. A judgment which so ruthlessly invaded all precedent that they crucified Him as seditious and a disturber of the peace.

In seeking then to examine our hearts as to the hindrances obtruded by sin to the advancement of faith, we must clarify our spiritual perceptions. We must rest content with nothing short of God's judgment concerning our moral character. Our worldly comfort and success are largely dependent on the estimate passed upon us by our fellows, but our heavenly success on the decision of a more searching court of appeal. To hug the world's judgment when favourable and only doubt its validity when it condemns, is in all probability to miss the one service which it might perform for us, for while the world has hated and persecuted the Saints, it has also cast out some sinners for good cause. And the world's condemnation ought always to make a man bethink himself, lest perchance

in this one case at least the world may have stumbled on truth, and there be ground of justice for its sentence.

XIV

HIDDEN INSINCERITIES

SELF-KNOWLEDGE is the foundation stone of moral improvement. The path of wisdom has been pointed out by moral teachers in varying accents, but the burden of their counsel is ever the same, from the Delphic oracle's mystic "Know thyself," to the popular song "O wad some power the giftie gie us." But the attainment of this knowledge is difficult, it is apt to entail painful disillusionment, so we are tempted to rest content for the most part in placid ignorance. A recent writer has discoursed ingeniously on the benefit which accrues from living on terms

of intimacy with one's own mind. All too often men do not know the richness of intellectual resource which lies ready to hand within themselves. Instead of making the mind the confidant of quiet hours, leaving a wide margin for its pensive or playful moods, they drive it like a drudge, a mere means to an end, and thus lose the fine flavour of delight which revery and meditation afford. Living on terms of intimacy with one's conscience may not open such alluring vistas, but it is surely the part of prudence in view of the uncompromising justice of ultimate moral awards. Are we strictly honest with ourselves? There is no question freighted with more tremendous issues. We know in a rough sort of way whether we are honest with our fellows. Perhaps we have been wont to think that this determines the whole

question of sincerity. On the contrary this lies on the very outskirts of the ethics of honour. To play at masquerade before God in the hidden passages of the heart, is fraught with consequences more dire than result from any overt act of deceit practised among men. Moral insincerity vitiates faith at its spring. It renders the soul absolutely incapable of communion with God who is the Truth.

But necessary though it be in the interests of a pure morality to push one's way into this dreary land of self-deception, the enterprise is not without its special dangers. When the soul first awakes to the possibility of such unsuspected treachery it may easily become morbidly analytical and introspective. To doubt one's self is the last and bitterest agony, compared with it all other pangs are

as nought. One must guard against over-scrupulousness as well as callousness. In our self-knowledge we must treat ourselves fairly; manly common-sense is as needful as quick sensitiveness to sin. It is well therefore to be definite in our analysis of the true meaning of self-deception. To be vague here, to conjure up a danger which one does not fairly face, is to wound the soul and rob it of that healthy confidence essential to virile Christian character. All sin in its degree stultifies faith, but it by no means follows that because one commits an act even grossly inconsistent with his professed belief he is therefore insincere. A sin of impulse bears a very different complexion from a sin coolly planned and deliberately consummated. Both must needs be purged away by penitence,

but the latter should prompt to deep heart-searching lest it signify that the will has never been brought into subjection to that Divine law which the sentiments approve. Even a deliberate sin may not signify complete insincerity of purpose, but it is surely a danger-signal not to be lightly ignored. Moreover a habit of sin must be sharply distinguished from an isolated act. Habit is a tyrannous master and it may happen that it has gained such strength in the course of years that while the will is honestly intentioned to do the right it is impotent as yet to assert its full claims to sovereignty. God is Almighty, and He can overcome the most deeply-rooted habit once and for all by a miracle of grace. But it is sometimes His will that the soul should struggle long with habits of

evil, learning lessons of patience and humility, suffering in order that through chastisement it may be purified. A habit of sin, however, demands the closest scrutiny and the severest self-examination. The line is a subtle one between reverent submission and blameworthy acquiescence, yet on the one side lies life, on the other death. "I cannot help it," is always the cry of a completely unbelieving temper. Faith cannot consist for one moment with this mood. It is hard to have faith in the presence of a besetting sin. But herein lies faith's supreme test and most glorious opportunity. To honestly repent, be filled with contrition yet to hope; to gird up one's loins and renew the conflict; to yield not for one instant to despair but once again aim at the highest,—this is

moral sincerity and nothing short of it is worthy the name. Conquest over confirmed habit is often very long delayed. Progress is so slow that we can hardly mark it, but progress of some sort there must certainly be, or we are bound to question the integrity of our purpose. If advance is not evident week by week, seek the signs by months. If this gauge of measurement baulk your search, let the test be year by year. A will fixed by the grace of God on righteousness must in the end prevail, but the heavenly standard of progress is not always adapted to satisfy the impatience of earthly desire.

Tests of moral sincerity are not hard to find, but we must look for them in the right place. We live too much amidst conventional notions of our spiritual estate, fancy pictures of our-

selves, which we have gazed upon until they have assumed the form and feature of reality. It is a common mistake for men to regard emotions as the essential traits determining their religious character. They find themselves easily stirred by the contemplation of Divine truth; they are open to the access of distinctly pleasurable sensations at times of public worship; their hearts are moved by sentiments of generosity and kindliness when an effective sermon fires the imagination. Surely these feelings have virtue in them, they argue a religious spirit, what surer proof could one ask of a Christian frame of mind? "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not." Emotion as emotion has

no moral character whatever, it is a thing of nerves and temperament. It may be equally well the product of a glass of champagne or a religious ecstasy. He must look sharply who would discover the exact significance of the sensuous thrill experienced under the influence of religious excitement, and the longer he ponders the more baffling will be the complexity of the problem. Emotion wins place among the serious factors of the religious life solely from its relation to a subsequent act of the will. If it stimulate to righteous deeds it is a moral force, if it begins and ends in itself it works destruction. To rest content in emotion is always dangerous. Emotion is purposed to give an uplift to the spirit which shall make *action* the joyous exercise of power. If we divert it from this its normal end

it enervates and saps the energy of the soul. Thus abused it is a favourite weapon of the father of lies, for men are fooled thereby into thinking that they are good when they are bad, that they are servants of God when in reality they are slaves to the most insidious form of luxury.

The call of faith is to arduous endeavour. It does not satisfy the demands of sincerity that we avoid evil motives and grossly sinful acts. We must do the right. Sins of omission receive too scant consideration in popular manuals of self-examination. To be a loyal follower of Jesus Christ demands positive sacrifice, and that with all joy and gladness of spirit. If we are not pushing zealously on in the path of righteousness, doing today the task which was beyond our power yesterday, realizing in ever-

increasing measure the fulness and freedom of the Divine life, we are not honestly disposed in our hearts as servants of God. Willing to do the will of God,—this is the condition which Christ Himself imposed as requisite to a heavenly knowledge. How wide the sweep of its application, how ruthlessly it lays bare the sophistries by which men seek to drug conscience! The will of God, this is absolute righteousness and absolute love. It knows no compromise with selfishness, it reckons no love complete which shrinks from the uttermost of sacrifice. To be willing to do less, even though it escape the charge of insincerity, bears within it no promise of high spiritual fruition. It were well not to bargain too closely with our souls where such abundant and eternal blessings are at stake. It

were folly to haggle over nice points of casuistry, asking just where the line may be drawn which shall save us from the fate of the dishonest and self-deceived among the multitudes of professed followers of our Lord. Loyalty is best evidenced by utter self-forgetfulness and the abandon of devotion. It is the part of true wisdom to look to it that "an entrance be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

XV

THE TYRANNY OF CUSTOM

INDIVIDUALISM is a word of somewhat doubtful dignity. In recent philosophical thought it has been the object of much animadversion. Individuality is a narrower and meaner concept than personality, the former emphasizing differences, what each man possesses alone, as over against the splendid unity of a common spiritual heritage. And yet there is an element of sacredness in the unique endowment of the individual, which cannot be overlooked without serious loss to the spiritual life. There is a sense in which a free and independent spiritual development is a

part of every man's birthright. No plea in behalf of social bonds, welding personality into the larger corporate life, must blind us to this truth. Each soul must make its own discoveries, the deep things of the spirit cannot be learned from hearsay. Each man must ultimately face life for himself, there can be no shifting of the burden, no acting by proxy. Life's lessons are conveyed only through vital contact. Hints as to method may be gained from others, but every step of genuine progress is due to a profoundly original movement, in which the soul shares with no other the effort or the responsibility.

This tendency to make light of individuality finds a practical expression in the exceeding deference to custom and convention which prevails widely in these days. There is a wise saw,

that "in all unimportant matters we must do as others do,"—and this implicitly sets forth the valid import of conventions. They embody a tacit agreement as to how ordinary acts shall be done, in order that men may live together with the least friction. They lubricate the wheels of society, and in their proper place are most useful. To run amuck with convention, in dress or manner or the trifles of every day life, is to proclaim the shallowest vanity. Only the dullard mistakes eccentricity for originality. But to rest satisfied with conventions is to pass from the real world into the realm of thin and bloodless abstractions. The conventional man simply drifts along on the surface of life's stream, driven hither and thither by the shifting currents of popular opinion; he asks no longer whether a thing is true, it is

enough if it be "accepted." Moreover the very fact that a thing is done again and again, and has thereby become embodied in the mass of data which society receives without question, is ever tending to blur the sharp edges of reality. The senses give us warning. Frequent repetition often robs them of their fine discriminating power. The man who lives amidst the roar of factory wheels ceases to mark the noisy confusion. And so with the sublime beauties and delicate harmonies of nature. We have grown so used to them that they fail of stirring appreciative response. Is not the same true in the moral and spiritual world? Are not some truths grown so common that they have lost their impressiveness? They are the property of the world in circle, and as such we yield them a mere mechanical alle-

giance. To preserve the freshness of our faculties, to look on the world with the unspoiled eyes of children, to be fired with an enthusiasm that no routine can dull, to claim every truth as ours by the inalienable right of Divine sonship,—this is the goal of a true moral culture, the independence of the spirit.

The whole cycle of religious life is threatened, from the fundamental thought of God to the last refinement of ritual service. God,—the idea is a part of our intellectual furnishing, it came without effort on our part, without the rousing of any special interest. We received it from our fathers, successive generations have overlaid it with human glosses and crass theorizing. The very word has become a common-place of speech, a counter signifying the vaguest of conceptions.

It is defiled by blasphemy, bandied to and fro in argument, uttered lightly in the course of frivolous conversation. Like a much-used coin it has lost the sharp impress, the clear-cut lines with which it came from the mint. The thought of God fits well enough into the notional universe in which for the most part we live, there is nothing disturbing about it, it cannot be said to interfere materially with the natural ordering of our affairs. This is the awful incubus of custom shadowing the spirit's life. We believe because our fathers believed before us, because we do not care enough about the matter even to have doubts. And so complete is the illusion in this empty semblance of religion, that its victims generally seem incapacitated for recognizing that there can be anything higher.

A somewhat radical thinker, discussing hindrances to faith, once remarked, "Do not forget that the Church is the greatest hindrance of all." Irreverent as the words are they contain a half-truth which gives them a sting. The Church, like the individual, has been left by her Lord to work out her salvation with fear and trembling. Inspired by the Spirit, guided into truth according to the Divine promise, home of the Saints, the Kingdom of God, she has yet for her perfecting been exposed to the fiery trial of temptation, and her spiritual efficacy has been sorely hampered at times by this same dead-weight of traditionalism. The lethargy which creeps over the individual has pervaded the Church, and in certain notable historic instances she has even opposed a faith which put to shame

her own easy-going acceptance of formulas. She burned Savonarola at the stake, cast Luther out, would not give scope within her borders for the Evangelical zeal of a Wesley. Object not that they were revolutionaries, that they fell into grievous errors; they were heroes of the spiritual life, and the Church of the day failed to hold them and guide them because she was derelict in her supreme calling. Faith is an idealist and an agitator,—faith is restless with the eagerness of discovery. Words will not satisfy it, it starves on phrases, it must find God. And this finding of God is the most startlingly original experience in the whole range of human endeavour. It never grows old, it never falls into hard and fast lines, it never exactly reproduces itself. One cannot forecast the moment of revelation,

nor the phase of the soul's life in which the Divine word will clearly utter itself. The help which friend or counsellor can give is at best but crude essay at guidance. The substance of spiritual insight cannot be conveyed from soul to soul by any cleverest expedient of language, even when reinforced by the tenderest sympathy. Indeed the deepest mysteries of the spirit are by their very nature unutterable; he who knows them most truly will be the last to attempt their clear explication. The soul face to face with God, this is the foundation of the spiritual life, the attitude and the atmosphere of a living faith. Breaking through all rules, all words, behind all customs however reverend, all recorded experiences however venerable, we must seek Him Whom to know is life.

If due awe and reverence in the presence of life's mystery filled the soul habitually, this would serve as sufficient safeguard against the dangers which threaten. But these finer susceptibilities of our spiritual nature are easily lost. Apathy creeps over men as the idealism of youth dies out in the light of common day. Reverence must rule not only in word and act, but in the innermost sanctuary of the heart; reverence which turns a deaf ear to all ill-considered reference to Divine things, which hushes with deepest awe before one ventures to utter the name of God. Common life is full of God, then walk reverently in the ordering of all its details. Think far enough, and you will inevitably come upon mystery; feel deeply enough, and you touch the skirts of God. It is well also sometimes to

shatter conventions by some notable and exceeding sacrifice. This does not contravene the truth that Christian sacrifice is cumulative, that it consists in the spirit of sacrifice, manifesting itself in all the simplest acts and most ordinary duties. We must avoid histrionic methods, and should leave it to the immaturity of youth to be forever seeking extraordinary methods for the display of self-devotion. But contact with the world tends to pare down ideals to very humdrum proportions. We are all in danger of gradually accommodating our moral standard to the modicum of righteousness which satisfies the aspiration of the average man. We need to be waked up from time to time, and sacrifice to the point of pain has a wonderfully stimulating effect. If we are resting in

names and phrases, pain is real and recalls us to a more vivid world. God reveals Himself through pain as well as through joy; if happiness has left us arid and unfruitful the tonic severity of a sacrifice may import new life into spiritual service. The mere impulsiveness of a momentary enthusiasm is worthless, but a new strenuousness of rule in devotion, in alms-giving, in active charity, faithfully fulfilled, is wholesome discipline.

Alas, it is to be feared that the whole of life is to many passed in a kind of shadow-land. The reality of earthly as well as heavenly relationships is lost in surface intercourse, which rarely touches the deeper springs of thought and feeling. They know themselves and their neighbour no better than they know their God. If conventions rule us absolutely in

our life in the world, we may not hope to escape the same tyranny in the religious sphere. After all unless one is a *man* he cannot be a Christian.

XVI

DELUSIVE INDEPENDENCE

CHARLES KINGSLEY having been taken to task for the severity with which he reproved his children's indifference to public opinion and established tenets, defended himself by saying that no affectation was so easily acquired as that of a trenchant radicalism. Sober respect for the sifted judgment of the wise is not a showy virtue, it is not so apt to win applause as the courage which revels in contradiction, but for the mass of men it would seem to be quite as safe a guide toward truth. Independence does not necessarily imply isolation; *Athanasius contra*

mundum is the splendid exception which proves the rule that the average man is generally wrong when the whole weight of authoritative opinion is against him. It is easy to misconstrue liberty as license. The thrill of daring thought may exhilarate, even when the thought is as unsound as it is erratic. To wander along untrodden paths is tempting to many minds, even though the road lead nowhere and the net result of effort be only the sensation of novelty. Restraint may grow irksome though it be the hand of love holding us back from dangerous folly, but the true name for such a mood is waywardness, not independence. Liberty is freedom to do the right, not whatever we please; and knowledge of the right is the slow acquisition of the ages. A claim to unique enlightenment is as likely to be

the boasting of an upstart adventurer as the fine self-confidence of the seer.

Tradition has as legitimate a place in the religious life as discovery, its function in the furtherance of faith is important and intimate. Traditionalism slays, the suffix of three letters voids the word of dignity and virtue; but tradition vitally assimilated is of the very substance of faith. The life of the spirit is subject to laws as truly as the life of the body. Faith is not furthered by the abandonment of all guidance and scorn of precedent,—wilfulness is not the prerequisite, but humility. When our Lord declared that He came to found a kingdom, He forever established coöperation as an essential principle of the spiritual life. Tradition is the vital link binding generation to generation in a unity of knowledge concerning the things of

the spirit. A tradition may be abused; its true content being misunderstood factitious additions may corrupt it. It may become a dry shell out of which the kernel of living truth has been long since lost. A tradition must be *used* to preserve its purity; it needs to be constantly under the strain of action. When it has become an archæological curiosity, passed on from hand to hand, it has no longer spiritual potency. But the fact that a tradition has ceased to prevail effectively does not prove that it is no longer needed. The world may have been neglectful to its own serious loss. A tradition may seem dead quite as much because of faulty reaction on our part as through any inherent lack of vitality.

A curious fallacy lurks in the opposition which is sometimes assumed to

exist between the claim of Catholic tradition and the unique authority ascribed to the Bible. The Bible itself is largely founded on tradition. The living voice of personal testimony, the Gospel passing from mouth to mouth, nourished the Church for years before it took shape in a book. And the written records themselves are to a great extent sealed, save as light is thrown on them by the usage of the Church, preserved to us in her traditional acts down through the ages. What is the significance of St. John's silence, for instance, concerning the institution of the Sacraments, viewed in connection with the third and sixth chapters of his Gospel? Shall we say that he regarded Baptism and the Eucharist lightly, in comparison with mystical discourses on truth? Or shall we recognize that the universal use of

the Church rendered unnecessary any special emphasis laid upon those Sacraments which were the very breath of her life? Without tradition natural inference would in this, as in many cases, lead almost inevitably to erroneous conclusions. It is a favourite device of a shallow criticism to object that because tradition does not indicate the exact exegesis of every disputed passage, therefore it is practically useless as a guide illuminating the true meaning of Scripture. But this is to mistake the real function of tradition; it does not claim to supersede literary criticism, and close all questions in debate. It does, however, place one at the true angle of vision; it suggests broad lines of interpretation, it opens safe avenues of approach. It produces an atmosphere which defines in clearer outline, and reveals truer proportions,

than the misty guesses of individual prepossession and caprice. Even though much of the detailed exegesis of the Fathers may have to be modified in the light of modern linguistic scholarship, the consensus of the Fathers as to the spiritual trend of Scripture argument is probably the weightiest and wisest authority to which we can defer.

The same holds true in the matter of spiritual discipline. It is perfectly possible that the soul should climb to heights of faith without the aid of devotional methods derived from the age-long experience of the Saints. It is equally possible that these same venerable methods should be so abused as to prove a clog, instead of help, to the free play of the soul's higher faculties. Yet it is only the verdict of common-sense that a good man's ex-

perience is of infinite value and suggestiveness to him who wishes to follow in the footsteps of his sanctity. In order to reap the benefit of Catholic discipline, however, one must start with an initial confidence. The critical attitude is thoroughly antagonistic to that simplicity of heart which alone can look for large results from any devotional rule. Discipline will not yield its fruits to him who tries it as an experiment; failure is a foregone conclusion. To approach the traditional discipline of the Church in this spirit is as stupid as Mr. Tyndall's famous prayer-test. Pray for the patients in one hospital, and omit prayer in the treatment of those in the hospital across the way; the proportionate number of cures will settle the question of the efficacy of prayer. God Almighty put on trial by a savant, and given the

chance to prove His power to the enlightened scientific mind! So devotional discipline is not patient of treatment which virtually amounts to a condescending willingness to let the Church prove her claim to spiritual virtue if she can. The Church is a mother who demands humble reverence, abounding trust, before the treasures of her wisdom and her tenderness can be made known to her children. The soul has the right to expect unutterable blessings in its life of faith, strange and beautiful experiences far beyond aught that the language of earth can express. But this rare flower and fruitage springs most surely from a seemingly prosaic rule,—definite, stern, trite it may be. For by such rule gracious dispositions are bred, patience and consistency, humility and obedience, the foundations

of holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. "I will do as seemeth good to me," is the counsel of a barren self-conceit, the mere affectation of independence. For the true independence of faith there is need that the will be sharply trained that it may become plastic to the behests of the spirit. And obedience in little things is the only school which fits for the great self-abnegation whereby heaven is won.

Subtle correspondencies bind human life into a great unity. Thought answers thought across the centuries; no man liveth to himself nor dieth to himself. The doctrine of the Communion of the Saints voices the mighty fellowship whereby the faithful live one life in God through all the ages. The life of faith is intensely individual, the soul and

God,—the awful sacredness of this relation brooks no intruder. But the life of faith is at the same time intensely social; man is redeemed as a member of the Body of Christ, love is the sign and seal of his redemption. We are always receiving and giving in the life of the spirit. Every aspiration, every struggle, every triumph of righteousness enters into the life of all, furthering the widest ends. My faith strengthens the faith of my brother, and is in turn sustained and strengthened by the faith of all the servants of God. Thankful recognition of help, humble acknowledgment of obligation, docility, childlikeness, these ever characterize the children of the kingdom, and win a way to freedom, while self-sufficiency is the slave of blindness and conceit.

XVII

BARRIERS WHICH ENFRANCHISE

SHARPNESS of definition is essential to clear thought. There are many experiences of the heart which transcend exact definition, but in the interest of sane thinking we must be careful how we yield ourselves unreservedly to the heart's impulse, and accept the validity of its dictates without question. It may be possible for the intellect to lay down lines which shall direct the heart's activity into right channels, even though it fail itself to follow on to the goal of spiritual intuition. The riot of mystical impulse certainly needs some check. False ecstasies due to morbid

pathological conditions vie with the visions of the prophet for recognition. Wearied nerves blur distinctness of outline, and the consequent vagueness of apprehension may be mistaken for depth of insight which reaches to ultimate mysteries. It is a healthy instinct which prompts to rationalizing religious experience as far as may be. We should always seek to justify our faith to our intellect. We shall not succeed perfectly, but the exercise will serve as prophylactic against unworthy superstitions. To deny the limitations of the intellectual faculty is folly, but it is no greater folly than to lazily acquiesce in its abeyance within the sphere to which discursive reasoning is competent.

Dogma is definition, nothing more. It presupposes that we know certain truths not alone with the certitude of

spiritual experience, but according to the categories of the intellect. If we know nothing we cannot dogmatize, if we know anything with certainty we must dogmatize. It is to be regretted that the word dogma has been appropriated so exclusively to the formulating of religious truth, for this obscures the identity of the process with clearness of definition in all branches of knowledge. There are dogmas of science, dogmas of philosophy, dogmas of trade, just as truly as there are dogmas of religion. The difference of subject matter and methods of arriving at conclusions, ought not to blind us to this obvious fact.

But into what ill-repute the dogmatic temper has fallen among the intellectually enlightened. The word dogma has an uncouth sound to our ears, it summons up visions of a fet-

tered spiritual life, of intellectual paralysis, of cruel and irrational prejudice. This means, however, simply that man abuses his best gifts, that everything which he touches is more or less marred in the handling. We ought not to let evil associations clinging to words interfere with the fairness of judgment which we would fain bring to the consideration of essential truths. Jesus Christ gave utterance to no dogma we are told,—but this is profoundly untrue. Every assertion concerning Himself and His Father, ringing with the assurance of Divine knowledge, was of the nature of dogma. These assertions have been the foundation of all subsequent dogma, which has issued from the eager desire to understand ever more and more clearly the truth contained in them. The development of doctrines

has been no smooth-flowing stream, gradually acquiring force and volume, and deflected by no cross-currents and obstructions. Rather has it been as complex as the processes of life itself, gaining strength through resistance, advancing through the elimination of errors tried and found wanting. Again and again has dogma been confounded with subtleties of individual speculation; many an ingenious theological system, like a pyramid balanced on its apex, has toppled over to the confusion of its projector. Upon dogma have been based narrowness, the cruelty of persecution, irrational opposition to the advance of knowledge. Yet after all this abuse there still rises, above the din and confusion and ruin of systems, the great structural outlines of a Catholic theology. Intellectual fairness de-

mands that at least we should know what it is before we impatiently condemn. It is said by the world to be a prison-house, yet it claims to enfranchise thought. It is said to be the cunning work of dreamers, but it claims to have been wrought out under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. At least it is no individual's theorizing, but the consensus of what the Saints have thought to be essential to safeguarding the immediate assertions of Jesus Christ. What if these venerable definitions concerning the nature of the Triune God, and the Person of Jesus Christ, should prove themselves avenues leading to abundant spiritual experience attainable by no other path? What if we should find that unless we think thus we inevitably run into contradictions which destroy all thought, and find ourselves hope-

lessly enmeshed in barren negations? If this were so, then dogma would prove itself the liberator of thought in the spiritual sphere, not its enslaver. But certainly it can never perform this gracious ministry for us so long as we totally mistake its nature and function. Dogma does not map out the infinite, and solve all mysteries. On the contrary it solves none, any more than the formularies of biology solve the mystery of physical life. At best dogma is but the imperfect utterance of children, face to face with truths too mighty for their comprehension. Language strains and gives way, it can but adumbrate thought, when the object of thought is God Almighty. But language which has stood the test of the Christian centuries as the wisest, even though it be still imperfect, has some claim to veneration.

If it seem to contradict our reason and experience, it may be because we mistake its meaning or misread our experience,—it were doubtful at any rate whether on the spur of the moment we should be able to choose words more nicely. And although it is sometimes lightly assumed that the advance in metaphysics and psychology renders the old doctrinal statements out of date, the more deeply we study them the more shall we wonder at their extraordinary harmony with many of the profoundest results of modern philosophical research.

But how believe in an abstract proposition? One cannot believe in the same sense as one believes in a person,—the ultimate object of faith is always the latter. But believing in a person, one may in a secondary sense believe in assertions concerning him.

The former has indeed a fulness of spiritual content, a vital inevitableness, in which the acceptance of dogma from its intrinsic nature cannot share. In one case faith is another aspect of love, it partakes of the warmth and enthusiasm of a personal relationship; in the other its affiliations are intellectual, faith is grounded in adequate testimony and partakes of the character of rational judgment. But the choice being made in the light of sound reason and the interests of the spiritual life, it becomes replete with moral consequences. If one choose he can remain forever undecided in the presence of propositions demanding his allegiance in the name of the Catholic Church; many people stand thus from stupidity, others from defect of will. But the importance of the issues involved seems to render neutrality akin

to moral unfaithfulness. He should make up his mind for or against. Granted that the heart is touched by Jesus Christ, that one believes in Him, it would seem no long step to accept what those have believed concerning Him who have known Him best and loved Him most deeply. Invert the order, believe about Him before one believes in Him,—ah, here we come upon traces of the deadliness of the letter. The man who breathes habitually the atmosphere of theological propositions, and rests content, is dead while he lives. Dogma is a path along which the soul may enter the City of Truth; if the soul stands still, the Faith is useless however directly it may lead to the City. As well be lost in the wilderness as standing on the highway, if one never pushes toward his goal. Dogma must be vitalized by the ac-

tivity of the spirit, used as a means whereby one comes to know the Living God, or it utterly misses of its true purpose. If it fail to be consummated in adoration its end is blasphemy.

XVIII

SPIRITUAL REALIZATIONS

THE man who stands upon a plain, and looks out over the landscape, sees objects in a certain relation and perspective, and adjusts his judgments to his point of view. If he climb a hill the sweep of the horizon is broader, new objects come into his field of vision, and the old fall into new combinations. From the new vantage-ground much must needs seem greatly changed, yet we do not deem that the present outlook contradicts the old, it is merely a wider synthesis. If he push onward to a mountain peak the view changes again, fresh vistas open before him,

new readjustments of former conceptions are necessitated. So with faith, it does not contradict reason, it merely climbs a mountain whence it commands a wider view; new facts come within its ken, old relationships are modified by clearer vision. To faith is given a glimpse of consistency between seemingly irreconcilable truths. Contradictions coalesce in unity through the living experience of the spirit, but no despite is thus cast upon reason.

The path of faith is a bold one, it does not deal in compromises, it never follows a *via media*. A most striking illustration of this power of faith is apparent, when we consider the hopeless difficulty which the speculative reason encounters in harmonizing the conception of the immanence and the transcendence of God. Popular thinking assumes the truth of God's tran-

scendence without questioning; but this involves very crude notions of God's relation to His world. God is somehow conceived as outside His creation, acting upon it as an external force, related to men as Law-giver and Judge, person over against person, in a relationship strictly analogous to that which characterizes human individuality. Out of this purely mechanical theism is developed a moral and religious cultus which has a certain effectiveness until a more thorough-going metaphysic threatens the whole structure with collapse. Meanwhile modern philosophical thought tends strongly toward a theory of the immanence of the Divine which would obliterate all distinctions between God and the world. Pantheism is a cheap charge to bring against speculative systems; all profound religious thought

must contain elements which can be wrested to a pantheistic interpretation. But when every process of finite thought is conceived as possible only because God is the thinker, and the higher self toward which we struggle is identified with God, it is difficult to see how morals in the ordinary sense can be saved, or any of the traditional exercises of religion be justified. Faith confronted with these two conceptions of the Divine Life boldly accepts both. God is to her *in* and *through* all, and at the same time *above* all. Faith has the task laid upon her to satisfy all the demands of the spirit. It is God's world, no power can be divorced from God, no reason conceived as existent separate from Him. Therefore faith rejoices in a God more intimately associated with every movement of life than I am with my own

acts,—"It is no longer I that live but Christ that liveth in me." At the same time the moral imperative, and the sweet intimacies of spirit with spirit in the life of love, demand the relative independence of the creature. Therefore faith with childlike simplicity prays to the Father in heaven, and follows implicitly every pure instinct of the heart which prompts to outward service and sacrifice. Who shall dare to say that faith in this is not irradiated with heavenly wisdom? If she is not intellectually consistent, it is only because her consistency is of a higher type than falls within the province of logic. Life which prevails by its own harmony and beauty is the highest spiritual proof of truth.

In the same way faith triumphs over the seemingly hopeless contradiction of evil existent in the creation of

a loving God. It is more than doubtful whether any speculative solution is possible, save as evil is robbed of its distinctive nature and regarded as only a negative moment in the progress toward righteousness, a conclusion which casts discredit on the deepest moral instincts within us. Faith seizes on the practical solution offered by God's infinite condescension in the cross of Christ. Jesus Christ came and laid hold of all those elements in life which had seemed most irreconcilable with the thought of a loving Father,—poverty, weakness, misunderstanding, hatred, sorrow, pain and death,—and through them, not in spite of them, manifested love Divine and eternal in its fullest radiance and glory. He made a human life composed of these intractable materials so exquisite in its beauty that the whole

world has been won to admiration. The light shining from the cross searches the depths of the human heart with vivifying power. The dark side of life cannot in any event be quite what we had thought it, for once at least it has been utterly redeemed, made instinct with Eternal Goodness. If faith were to wait pondering this revelation for the satisfaction of intellectual scruples, then the clear light would become dimmed. The cross is not demonstrative to reason, its interpretative force is not speculative but practical. Faith immediately puts the lesson of the cross in practice. Faith prompts a man to cast himself on Christ, not yield mere intellectual assent. And to cast one's self on Christ means to do as Christ did. Therefore the very first act of faith is to seize the immediate present,

with whatever of pain or difficulty it is fraught, and make it sweet and wholesome and beautiful by sacrifice and love. Christ made everything which he touched beautiful, then I will do the same by the power of His spirit,—this is faith in Christ. Nothing is so mean and sordid that it can resist the almighty power of love. Nothing is so common-place that it is not potentially the stuff of which heaven is made. Speculative difficulties fall away of themselves in the presence of this practical demonstration. The soul has climbed above them, breathes an air too lofty for the vapours of earth to sully its brightness. But there is no use standing on the plain and gazing upward, one must climb to the height himself. Otherwise the message will come faint and thin, the story of faith's compensations

will sound like an echo from dreamland.

But this is not a treatise on the life of faith, it is but a series of hints at best. The deeper mysteries of faith's fruition do not lie within the scope of our argument. We have but aimed to prepare the way by turning the eye in the right direction. Some of the hindrances have been found mere mistakes and misunderstandings; others are of more serious import, yet they too disappear when faith is consummated in love. Test the theory by practice,—this is the only consideration craved. Many would seem to miss the path just because it is so plain and obvious, and lies so near their door: one step and you are on the road to heaven. Men agonize in their search for God, and all the time He is with them, pleading for recog-

nition in the simplest facts of life. They long for faith, would fain believe, but faith eludes them. Yet they have but to do the deed of faith and, if they will cease from struggling and trust like little children, the peace of Christ will steal into their hearts, all things will be made new according to His promise, and they shall know Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Robbins, W. L.
An essay toward faith.

234.2P
R539
cop. 1

1901	B. S.	1901	1910		
727	Lewis	M 2	Mary	Jung	Richg
Ap 12	H. Wilson	Ap 19	June 16	Oregon	June 20

234.2P
R539
cop. 1

O